



The Island Eagle

The Official Newsletter of the American Citizen Services Unit, U.S. Embassy Nassau

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ON DEC 31, EVERYONE WILL NEED A PASSPORT

Starting December 31, 2005, it is anticipated that all American Citizens returning to the US will need to have a passport to re-enter from The Bahamas. This new program, known as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, requires all travelers to and from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Bermuda—including Americans—to have a passport or other accepted document. The US Passport will be the primary travel document for

US Citizens. The goal of this program is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for US Citizens and legitimate foreign visitors.

Under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), The State Department must put this requirement into place by January 1, 2008. Current plans are to do so through a phased implementation schedule to ensure that US capacity to

produce travel documents will be sufficient to meet demand and will minimize any possible impact on tourism and business travel. We are working closely with the business and tourism sectors to ensure this type of travel is not negatively affected. The proposed timeline is as follows: on December 31, 2005 the requirement will be applied to all travel to or from Bermuda, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. On December 31,

2006 the requirement will be applied to all air and sea travel to or from Mexico and Canada. Finally, on December 31, 2007, the requirement will be extended to all air, sea, and land border crossings.

For more information on the initiative and how it may affect you, please visit our website travel.state.gov or the Department of Homeland Security's website www.dhs.gov.

HELPING OUT YOUR NEIGHBOR

We have all gotten the questions. Your neighbors think you are the expert on all things American. They expect a travel guide, a cultural critic, a news pundit, a visa expert, and more.

Well, we can't help you with the restaurant recommendations or the latest developments in the Michael Jackson case, but we do have an answer for the visa questions. You can direct your friends and neighbors to travel.state.gov, the same website we always tell you to visit. They can also e-mail their questions to our visa helpline, visanassau@state.gov.

In addition, there is one message that we try to get out to everyone—

We recommend all foreign nationals get a visa.

While Bahamians can travel to the US without a visa through our pre-clearance facilities in Nassau and Freeport, these facilities may need to be closed in an emergency such as a Hurricane.

And for your neighbors from other countries that say they "don't need a visa," they may be wrong. Only Canadians and Bermudans really don't need a visa. For citizens of those other countries, they are given a visa waiver at the border. The visa waiver program only applies to commercial travel, excluding things like private planes, private boats and medical evacuations.

For medevacs, it is especially important to have a visa. Making arrangements for the patient can be difficult and time consuming—complicating an already stressful time. And family will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to accompany their loved one in the medevac flight without a visa. This sad situation arises far more often than we would like.

So, now you can seem like the "America" expert they expect you to be and help us out at the same time. When asked, just give your friends our website and e-mail addresses and recommend that they get a visa in case of emergency, no matter what their country of origin.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Hours for Non-Emergency Services:
Mon. to Thurs. from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Fri. from 10:00 am to 12:00 am

To contact us and for general info:
Call **242-322-1181**. Follow the voice prompts for either general information or to speak with a member of the consular section. For after-hours emergencies, you can call **242-328-2206**.

E-Mail:
ACSN@state.gov

On the Web:
Embassy: nassau.usembassy.gov
Department of State: travel.state.gov



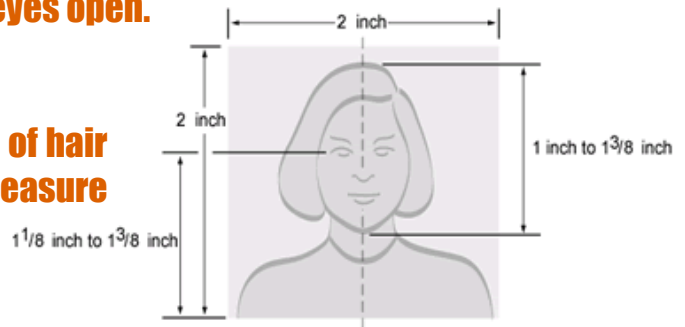
PHOTO OF THE MONTH

As part of our outreach program, members of the Embassy tour the Carnival *Fantasy*. From left, *Fantasy* doctor Adel Fahmy, Chief Consul Abdelnour Zaiback, GSO Admin. Asst. Esther Zaiback, CLO Melissa Honigstein, Vice-Consul Michael Honigstein, and *Fantasy* Staff Captain Roberto Salamone.

SEVEN TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PASSPORT PHOTOS

1 Frame photo with full face, front view, eyes open.

2 Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm).



3 Center head within frame (see Figure 2 below).

4 You are encouraged to have a natural expression.

5 Make sure eye height is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo.

6 The photograph should be against a plain white or off-white background.


7 Make sure that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background.



Improper passports photos can cost you wasted time and the money for replacements, so make sure they are right before you come in. We recommend that you take the photo without your glasses, but you can wear prescriptions as long as your eyes are visible. Hats or headgear are not acceptable unless they are worn daily for religious reasons and do not obscure your face or ears. Photos must be taken within the last 6 months. The photos at left are good, well-composed photos.

APRIL

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

 American Holiday (Embassy Closed)

MAY

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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29		31				

 Bahamian Holiday (Embassy Closed)

Know an American in The Bahamas or Turks and Caicos not getting the newsletter? Tell them to e-mail us at ACSN@state.gov with their name and address. We also recommend that all Americans overseas register at travel.state.gov in case of emergency.